



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

JAN 20 2012

The Honorable Dennis Kucinich
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kucinich:

This responds to your letter to the Department of Justice dated October 24, 2011, regarding the proposed realignment of the Department's Antitrust Division. The Department appreciates having the benefit of your perspective.

Due to current budget constraints, the Justice Department, like other federal agencies, is working to reduce spending without impairing our ability to enforce federal law and protect the American public. The Department's proposal to realign the Antitrust Division's workforce is in direct response to this imperative.

The rationale for consolidating Antitrust Division offices is two-fold: cost savings and more effective and efficient antitrust law enforcement. While the work of the Antitrust Division has become more challenging, its funding in current and future fiscal years is declining. The reduction in rent and associated costs as a result of the proposed realignment will assist the Division in responding to the \$3.2 million reduction in its budget for Fiscal Year 2012. This shift will allow the General Services Administration to attract alternate Federal tenants seeking to relocate without the significant cost of construction typically associated with office space occupancy.

Moreover, given the changing nature of the Antitrust Division's criminal antitrust caseload, the Department has determined that it is important to have more attorneys in fewer, core locations to ensure effective and efficient investigations. Potentially illegal behavior such as price fixing and bid rigging continues to become more sophisticated and involves larger volumes of commerce both domestically and internationally. The amount of electronic information that must be reviewed in Division investigations continues to expand rapidly, and criminals increasingly are using other languages and means of communication to set prices and manipulate deals. The proposed Antitrust Division realignment will give larger teams of government investigators the centralized resources they need to enforce antitrust laws most effectively.

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Each consolidated office will maintain frequent outreach to the United States Attorneys' Offices and to State Attorneys General nationwide. Ongoing outreach programs to state and local government procurement officials, trade associations, industry groups, school systems, and other state and local groups will also continue. Such outreach has allowed the Division to pursue matters efficiently and effectively, even in states in which the Division historically has not maintained a physical presence.

The Department agrees with you that the Cleveland Field Office is staffed with excellent attorneys and support staff. For that reason, all Division employees will be offered positions in remaining Division locations at full salary, and will be relocated at government expense. For individuals who may not be able to take advantage of these offers and relocate at this time, the Department will provide up to one year of severance pay to eligible employees, and also will provide substantial assistance in identifying and supporting alternate employment opportunities and providing transition counseling services.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may provide additional assistance regarding this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'm w', is written over the typed name.

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General